

How Much Help Do Your Aging Parents Need?

As your parents get older, chances are they'll need your help more often – whether it's with strenuous physical chores, organizing life's affairs or managing finances. You can use the chart on the other side of this page as a preliminary assessment tool.

If no help is needed yet, set the stage for the future

If you check “no help” or “occasional help” for most items on the chart, your parents are in good shape and you probably don't need a professional assessment at this point.

But that doesn't mean it's too early to start talking about the future. Depending on your and your parents' attitudes on aging, death and dying, it may feel awkward to broach the subject. But it's a relief for all parties when parents know their children plan to lend a hand, and when adult children understand their parents' preferences on different types of eldercare and assisted living, and their wishes should they become incapacitated or die.

It's also good to acknowledge uncertainties: none of us can read the future, and despite our best wishes there's much that's beyond our control. People's ideas and preferences often change as they get older, particularly as the realities of aging and mortality set in. Also, a child might discover that her intent to “do everything mom or dad needs” is not realistic, especially if she has other work and family responsibilities. Realizing ahead of time that everyone will have to roll with some punches may help parents and children alike face new challenges with grace and optimism.

Next steps if more help is needed now

If the responsibilities summarized in the “regular help” column on the chart seem overwhelming, or if you have multiple unmet needs listed in the “professional help” column, consider a planning meeting with your parents and caregiver team, and/or a professional needs assessment.

There are many eldercare providers and social services agencies that provide assessments. Call your EAP for help or ask your parent's doctor to recommend a geriatric specialist.

Need help giving help?

Caring for an aging relative can be an enormous responsibility. MHN's care consultants can help you:

- Evaluate your elder relative's daily living and healthcare needs, financial issues and legal concerns
- Assess the support you need
- Find the right assisted living, residential and medical care facilities
- Obtain information on senior meal services, community resources and more

Your assigned care consultant provides contact information for up to five local eldercare providers across two zip codes.

Call toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

(866) EAP-4SOC | (866) 327-4762

TDD: (800) 327-0801

or visit us at: members.mhn.com
company code: **SOC**



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- Check “no help” or “occasional” if parents are doing everything themselves or just need a helping hand once in a while.
- In the “needs regular assistance” column, jot down who will provide the help and on what schedule.
If possible, consider a team approach to caregiving; can siblings or older grandchildren pitch in?
- In the “professional assistance” column, summarize existing services provided and any unmet needs.

	No help needed	Occasional help needed	Needs regular assistance (List roles/responsibilities/schedule)	Professional assistance (Contact info and schedule, or help needed)
Self-care				
Dressing				
Bathing/personal hygiene				
Grocery shopping				
Meal preparation				
Other				
Health & Safety				
Recognizing symptoms that need attention				
Obtaining and managing meds				
Getting adequate exercise				
Making and getting to appointments				
Processing info (doctors' orders, test results, etc.)				
Maintenance of smoke detectors, light bulbs, etc.				
Can dial 911				
Other				
Household				
Housekeeping				
Laundry				
Yard work				
Other				
Transportation				
Getting to appointments, social events, etc.				
Financial				
Banking/paying bills				
Financial decision-making				
Other				

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